THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Removal of unexploded shells from firing ranges

1567. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "unexploded shells maiming many at army firing range", appearing in the Hindustan Times dated the 18th February, 1999;

(b) what is the criteria for identifying firing ranges by armed forces and the extent to wich consultations, if any, are held for monitoring of firing ranges with forest or other departments; and

(c) what steps Government would suggest to ensure that the unexploded shells are removed from firing ranges immediately so that common people are not affected by it in any manner?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Army authorities in consultation with State Governments indentify large tracts of land suitable for the purpose. Notifications under the Manoeuvres Field Firing and Artillery Practices Act, 1938 are then issued by State Government after seeking prior clearance from State Forest Department and Ministry of Environment and Forests wherever necessary.

(c) As per existing instructions, a unit or army formation which carries out firing practice records the location of unexploded shells/bombs at the end of firing on each day. These unexploded shells are required to be destroyed.

युद्ध में मारे गये सैनिकों की विधवाओं और उनके बच्चों के लिए आवासीय योजना

1568. **श्रीमती सरोज दुबे:** क्या रक्षा मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने युद्ध में तथा सीमा पर मारे गए सैनिकों की विधवाओं और बच्चों के लिए कोई आवासीय योजना बनाई है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं?

रक्षा मंत्री (श्री जॉर्ज फर्नान्डीज): (क) से (ग) आर्मी वेलफेअर हाउसिंग आर्गेनाइजेशन ने अपनी विभिन्न आवासीय योजनाओं के अंतर्गत निर्मित तीन प्रतिशत मकान सेना कार्मिकों की विधवाओं को वरीयता के आधार पर आबंटित करने के लिए निर्धारित कर दिए हैं। कार्रवाई में मारे गए सशस्त्र सैन्य कार्मिकों को इंदिरा आवास योजना में भी शामिल कर दिया गया है। कुछ राज्य सरकारें भी अपनी आवासीय योजनाओं के अंतर्गत उन्हें आवासीय स्थान तथा आवास प्रदान करती हैं।

Accidents of Indian Naval Ships

1569. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indian naval ships that have been involved in accidents at sea in the last five years, giving the details thereof; and the amount of loss, in terms of men and material, suffered by the Navy;

(b) what were the reasons for the accidents and were those accidents inquired into; and

(c) if so, the outcome of investigations and the action taken to check such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) During the last five years, only one Indian Naval Ship has met with an accident at Sea. INS Jyoti, the fleet tanker while on her return journey from Philippines, collided with a Bulk Carrier "MV Yickwing" of Panaman registration on 01 November 1998 in the Malacca Strait. Both the ships have sustained extensive damage to structure. However, no personnel were injured. The High Court of Malaya Jahan Bahru in Malaysia has been approached to claim compensation of damage from "MV Yickwing". A Board of Inquiry has been ordered to inquire into the reasons for the collision. The inquiry is in progress.

Inadequacy of defence preparedness

1570. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our defence

preparedness is far too inadequate and wanting, as compared to our neighbours;

(b) if so, the reasons for showing laxity in proper defence planning and to bring our defence preparedness comparable to neighbouring countries; and

(c) whether the Standing Committee of the Parliament, in its latest report, has also criticised Government for this?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Standing Committee on Defence in its Second Report, 1998, made a reference to the defence preparedness in the context of according a high priority to the defence sector and privision of adequate budgetary/allocations in 1998-99. The recommendation was conveyed to the Ministry of Finance in 1998 for its consideration.

Accident rate in IAF

1571. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that accident rate in IAF is going high;

(b) whether any study was commissioned by Air Headquarters in this regard;

(c) if so, what are its main findings; and

(d) whether Government propose to act on its finding?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) There has been decline in the accident rate in the IAF. As per the available statistics, the accident rate in respect of Category-I accident has come down from 1.01 in 1995-96 to 0.71 in 1998-99, (till February' 1999). No study has been commissioned by Air Hqrs in this regard in the last three years. However, a High Powered Committee on Fighter Aircraft Accidents (COFAA) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Scientific Adviser to Raksha Mantri to analyse the causes of the accidents which submitted its report in September, 1997. It has made certain recommendations to minimise accident rate. Implementation of these recommendations would involve changes in organisational structure, procedures, training, design, technology etc. Necessary instructions have been issued to the agencies/ Departments concerned to take suitable action in terms of the recommendations of the Committee.

Cases for denial of promotions in three services

1572. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 164 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 24th February, 1999 and state whether Government made study into this problem of increasing number of cases, field by officers of three services against denial of promotions during the last three years, for redressal of the grievances?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): Information regarding all court cases on service matters filed by the Services personnel and pending in various courts during the last 3 years was given in reply to the Unstarred Q. No. 164. Court cases on denial of promotion form only one part of the figures referred to therein.

No formal study has been conducted in this regard.

Action against Gujarat Government

1573. SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the report "Home Secretary faces a barrage of queries", appearing in the Statesman dated February 4, 1999;

(b) if so, whether the Home Secretary stated that everything short of dismissing the Gujarat Government, had been done; and

(c) if so, the action taken against the Gujarat Government so far and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During his visit to the USA, the Home Secretary was asked a number of questions on the reported attacks on Christians and their